

The Central Bureau of Statistics informs

MORE THAN 40% of CPI goods and services increase in price since last month



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THE Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) presents the most important findings for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of April 2015. The CPI for April 2015 is 118.47, a decrease of 0.1 percent compared to the index of March 2015 (118.65) and accumulating a decrease of 0.9 percent up to and including April of this year. Of the goods and services in the consumption basket of the CPI, 41.8 percent increased in price as compared to March 2015.

The percentage change of the CPI over the last 12 months (April 2014 to April 2015) is 1.1 percent, an increase of 1.5 percentage points (ppts) compared to the percentage change for the same period of last year (-0.4 percent). The period average percentage change of the CPI for the period April 2014 - April 2015 is 0.9 percent, an increase of 2.3 ppts compared to the period average percentage change over the period April 2013 - April 2014 (-1.4 percent).

During this month, three of the twelve sectors registered decreased in prices. The decrease which had the greatest influence on the CPI was registered for the "Recreation and culture" (-3.5 percent) sector, causing an effect of -0.29 ppts. The decreases in the remaining sectors had an effect of -0.03 ppts on the CPI of April 2015. Aforementioned decreases were partially offset by increases in the indices for the "Clothing and footwear" (1.1 percent), "Household operation" (0.6 percent) and "Miscellaneous goods and services" (0.5 percent) sectors, which had an influence of respectively, 0.05, 0.04 and 0.03 ppts on the CPI of April 2015. The increases in the remaining sector had an effect of 0.05 ppts on the CPI of April 2015.

The decrease in the "Recreation and culture" sector was mainly due to a decrease in the category "Holidays" (-34.7 percent), which contributed to an effect of -0.34 ppts. The decrease in the "Communications" sector was caused by a decrease of 0.3 percent in the

category "Telephone and telefax services", which contributed to an effect of -0.02 ppts. The increase in the "Clothing and footwear" sector was mainly due to an increase in the category "Clothing" (1.2 percent), which contributed to an effect of 0.05 ppts. The increase in the "Household operation" sector was mainly caused by an increase in the category "Household textiles" (7.5 percent), which contributed to an effect of 0.05 ppts. The increase in the "Miscellaneous goods and services" sector was due to an increase in the category "Personal effects n.e.c." (5.5 percent), which contributed to an effect of 0.03 ppts.

The consumption basket of the CPI consists of 452 goods and services. Compared to March 2015, 41.8 percent of these products had an increase in price, causing an effect of 0.63 ppts, while 27.7 percent showed a decrease, contributing to an effect of -0.78 ppts and the remaining 30.5 percent had no change in price. The prices of goods increased by 0.3 percent and caused an influence of 0.17 ppts. The prices of services showed a decrease of 0.9 percent and had an influence of -0.32 ppts on the CPI of April 2015.

The CPIC (core inflation) - CPI excluding the effect of energy and food - was 0.7 percent in April 2015, which is 0.5 ppts higher compared to the percentage change for the same period of last year (0.2 percent). The energy index - which consists of the products: electricity, water, gasoline and diesel - registered a decrease of 0.1 percent, which is 6.9 ppts higher compared to the percentage change for the same period of last year (-7.0 percent). The food index shows an increase of 3.6 percent, which is 3.6 ppts higher compared to the percentage change for the same period of last year (0.0 percent). The subsistence level for a household consisting of two adults and two children (aged 0-14 years) in April 2015 is Afl. 4,388, while for a single adult household it is Afl. 2,090.

May 18, 2015



CPI (BASE DEC 2006 = 100)

Index	↓	118.47
Monthly	↓	-0.1
Year-to-date	↓	-0.9
End of period	↑	1.1
Period average	↑	0.9
Goods	↑	0.3
Services	↓	-0.9

CPIC

CPIC	↑	0.7
Energy	↓	-0.1
Food	↑	3.6

SUBSISTENCE LEVEL *in Afl.*

1 adult	-	2,090
2 adults + 2 children	↓	4,388

CPIC: CPI excluding the effect of energy and food.

Energy: Electricity, water, gasoline and diesel.

SUBSISTENCE LEVEL: The minimum level of income which is perceived necessary to achieve an adequate standard of living.

Electricity and water REMAIN THE SAME

THE prices of electricity and water did not change compared to March 2015. Subsequently, the average electricity price per household remained at Afl. 342.59, while the average price of water per household remained at Afl. 137.05. The prices of utilities (electricity and water), gasoline and diesel are for the greater part determined by international crude oil prices. In April 2015 the average price per barrel of crude oil (US\$ 52.90) had an increase of US\$ 5.11 (10.7 percent) compared to March 2015 (US\$ 47.79).

Fuel surcharge for a usage of electricity up to 500 kWh did not change in April 2015, it stayed at Afl. 30.52 cents per kWh. Fuel surcharge for a

usage of electricity between 501 - 1000 kWh did not change in April 2015, it stayed at Afl. 32.56 cents per kWh.

In April 2015 the price of gasoline increased by Afl. 3.50 cents (2.0 percent) causing an effect of 0.10 ppts on the CPI. The price of diesel registered a decrease of Afl. 5.10 cents (-3.3 percent) in April 2015 and had an effect of -0.01 ppt.

In April 2015, utilities, gasoline and diesel as a group show an increase in price of 0.5 percent compared to March 2015, and had an influence of 0.09 ppts on the CPI, while the remaining 448 goods and services, as a group, experienced a decrease of 0.3 percent in price, causing an effect of -0.24 ppts on the CPI.

Table 5 Prices of crude oil, utilities, gasoline and diesel, 2014 - 2015

Month	2014							2015						
	Crude oil	Fuel		Electricity	Water	Gasoline	Diesel	Crude oil	Fuel		Electricity	Water	Gasoline	Diesel
		surcharge ≤500 kWh	surcharge 501-1000 kWh						surcharge ≤500 kWh	surcharge 501-1000 kWh				
January	95.07	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	219.50	205.80	48.21	30.52	32.56	342.59	137.05	168.80	152.50
February	100.92	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	220.30	204.80	50.64	30.52	32.56	342.59	137.05	161.70	141.90
March	100.76	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	226.30	208.10	47.79	30.52	32.56	342.59	137.05	177.40	155.50
April	102.31	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	228.60	205.00	52.90	30.52	32.56	342.59	137.05	180.90	150.40
May	102.10	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	236.80	205.70							
June	105.78	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	234.70	204.30							
July	103.87	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	240.40	205.10							
August	97.61	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	233.60	201.60							
September	93.29	24.60	30.90	306.75	137.05	229.30	200.90							
October	85.07	30.52	32.56	342.59	137.05	222.80	195.40							
November	75.62	30.52	32.56	342.59	137.05	201.90	184.50							
December	59.95	30.52	32.56	342.59	137.05	196.70	181.30							

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba

¹ Average West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil price per barrel in US\$ (Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration)

² Fuel surcharge in Afl. cents per kWh

³ Electricity price in Afl. is based on an average household usage of 725.5 kWh

⁴ Water price in Afl. is based on an average household usage

⁵ Gasoline and diesel prices in Afl. cents per liter

Statistics informs

Prices in vegetables RISE

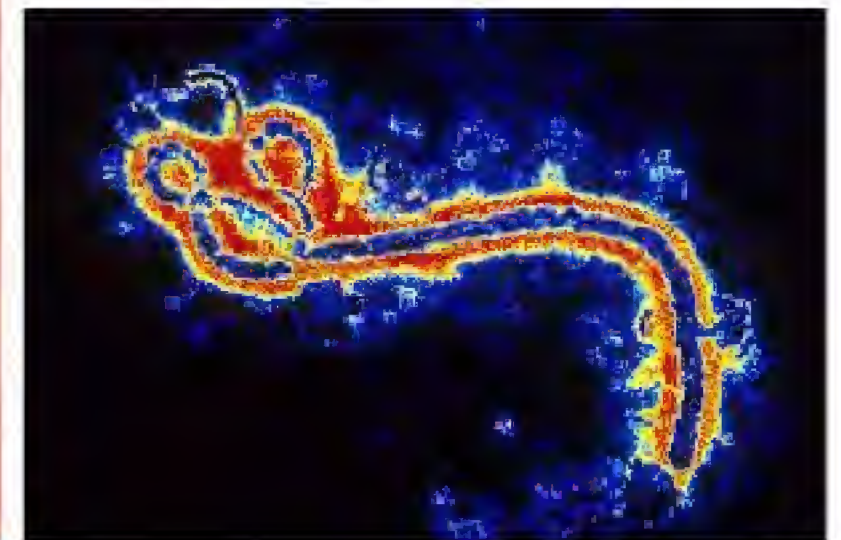
THE "Food & catering services" index shows an increase of 0.1 percent in April 2015, after a decrease of 0.6 percent in March 2015. The index for "Food at home" shows a slight increase of 0.02 percent in April, as five of the eleven "Food at home" indices increased in April 2015.

The "Vegetables" index registered the largest increase (2.7 percent) in April 2015 and was mainly caused by increases of 4.1 percent and 8.0 percent in the indices for "Onions" and "Celery and broccoli". Furthermore, increases of 1.0 percent, 0.4 percent and 0.4 percent were posted in the indices for "Fish and other seafood", "Oils and fats" and "Non-alcoholic beverages", respectively. The "Fruit" index registered the largest decrease (-2.0 percent) and was mainly caused by decreases of 5.3 percent and 9.8 percent in the indices for "Bananas and plantains" and "Grapes". Furthermore, decreases of 1.8 percent and 0.3 percent were posted in the indices for "Potatoes and other tubers" and "Milk,

cheese and eggs".

Over the last 12 months the "Food & catering services" index has increased by 3.8 percent. The "Food at home" index shows an increase of 3.7 percent. The "Fruit" index increased by 13.3 percent, the largest increase among the "Food at home" food groups, while the "Potatoes and other tubers" index shows the largest decrease (-9.0 percent).

The index for "Food away from home" shows an increase of 0.5 percent in April 2015, after an increase of 1.2 percent in March 2015 and has increased by 4.1 percent over the last 12 months. In April 2015, "Food at home" and "Food away from home" as a group show an increase in price of 0.1 percent compared to March 2015, and had an influence of 0.02 ppts on the CPI, while the remaining goods and services, as a group, experienced a decrease in price of 0.2 percent, causing an effect of -0.17 ppts on the CPI.



Health Minister refuses entry of passenger

with low risk for Ebola infection



AT the end of last week Minister of Health dr. Alex Schwengle refused the entry of two passengers flying in from the U.S. who were considered low risk cases for the Ebola virus. This is the first Ebola-related case to reach the island. "We complied with all that is stipulated in the protocols that we are managing, when it comes to Ebola," the Minister said. "We are indeed well prepared [for Ebola], but we chose to not take any risks."

On Friday morning, the Health Department was notified that there was a passenger on their way to Aruba from the United States who was considered a low risk case for the Ebola virus. Although the passengers did not display any symptoms, the Authorities did not want to take the chance. The passengers in question had apparently traveled to Sierra Leone 13 days prior, and as the incubation period for the Ebola virus is 21 days, the Authorities opted to refuse entry to the individuals to avoid any possibility that the virus could reach the island.

As soon as the plane landed at 3:00 p.m. at the Aruba airport, the passengers were escorted off the plane and taken to an isolated room. There the Airport's medical team

checked their temperatures, which were found to be normal. But after careful consideration together with the U.S. Immigration and Customs, the International Aviation Safety Association (IASA), the Aruba Immigration, and the U.S. Consul General stationed in Curacao, the decision was made to send the couple back to the U.S. on the same flight. For Aruba, it was a difficult decision because the couple was traveling to Aruba for a couple of days of vacation. The couple was told that if something were to happen, and they started showing symptoms, Aruba would not have the resources available to handle a potential outbreak, as they do in the U.S.

The Aruban Health Department was also in close contact with the organization in the Netherlands that handles these kinds of cases for all of the Dutch Kingdom. The case was apparently not the first time that low-risk passengers were traveling to Aruba, but in the previous situation the passengers were prevented from boarding the plane to Aruba in the U.S. It is, however, the first time that Ebola-risk passengers actually reach the island.

According to Authorities, neither passenger came into contact with anyone while they were in the Queen Beatrix Airport, according to protocol in handling potential Ebola cases.

Divi Resorts CELEBRATE Mother's Day



DIVI Resorts organized a wonderful Mother's Day Bingo for all the Divi Mothers on May 8th at the Alhambra Ballroom. All the mothers were very pleased with the wonderful Bingo Cash Prizes, weekend-stays, dinner for two's and much more.

There was also great entertainment for the Divi Mothers. The Mariachi Band: Perla di Aruba, Pearl of Aruba, also serenaded all the mothers with their wonderful Mariachi music.

There were some great prizes which were raffled during the Bingo games where all mothers had a chance to win great prizes.

Divi Resorts also elected its Mother of the Year, who was Wanda Abreu from the Divi Phoenix Housekeeping Department. As Mother of the Year, Wanda received a beautiful bouquet, crown, sash, a weekend-stay and a dinner for two.

Divi Resorts truly hopes that all the mothers enjoyed their bingo and that they also had a wonderful Mother's Day!



Divi hands out Excellence Awards

ON May 13, 2015 Divi Vacation Ownership Sales celebrated their Excellence Awards for the 1st quarter of 2015.

During the evening's festivities the winners of several categories were announced and celebrated, followed by anniversary celebrations.

1st Quarter winners for 2015

Finance Managers

Dal Time: Nickie Simmons

Phoenix: Joanne Greeley

Line Sales Representatives

Dal Time: Bienvenido Richardson

Phoenix: Elena Warren

In House Sales Representatives

Dal Time: Dawryn Semeleer

Phoenix: Rosy Russell

Marketing OPC Eelko Smedema

Overall Performance OPC Leonard Pengel

Marketing IPC Michelle Portier

Marketing Admin Rose Mary Euson

Marketing Receptionist of the 1st Quarter 2015 Melissa Wilches-Miranda

Celebrating their 5th anniversary with the company were Alean Ross, Jeanette Dennis, Nathalie Naar, Elena Warren and Delores Johnson.

Divi Vacation Ownership congratulates all the winners and also thanks all its employees who celebrated their anniversary with the company. Keep up the good work! Divi says.



Digicel wins Best Consumer Service Innovation award

DIGICEL Group took home two awards at the annual Global Telecoms Business Innovation Awards 2015 held at the Sheraton Park Hotel in London, England.

The two awards – both in the Consumer Service Innovation category – were for Digicel's Redknee-enabled utility payment service called Easypay that allows customers in Papua New Guinea to purchase electricity at any time directly from their mobile phone and the second for Digicel's roaming service, "Roam Like You're Home",

which sees customers paying local rates while travelling abroad and reducing roaming costs by more than 95 percent. Working in partnership with the country's incumbent electricity utility provider, Digicel and Redknee provided an alternative solution to the existing prepaid electricity voucher top-up payment method, where rural customers had to travel long distances to vending sites that were only available during business hours – a process that was time consuming, costly and inconvenient for the customer.

The roaming service, "Roam Like You're

Home", is the first of its kind in the region as it gives both prepaid and postpaid customers the freedom to use their phones to make calls, receive calls for free, send SMS and use data all at the same price as at home – crushing normal roaming rates.

"Digicel is always looking for innovative ways to make technology really work for the benefit of our customers. As a



total communications and solutions provider, we're all about delivering the best content, services and value to customers on their mobile phone. I want to congratulate the teams who worked hard to deliver these innovative services – their awards are well deserved," said Bob Sprengers, CEO of Digicel Aruba.



Minister Mike De Meza says

Budget deficit to be REDUCED with 15 million

LAST week during the budget meetings in Parliament, the AVP Fraction presented an amendment that guarantees that the Government will be able to reach its goal of a 3.7 percent deficit of the GDP, Minister of Economic Affairs, Communication, Energy and the Environment Mike De Meza said. According to the Minister, over the last 30 years we have seen that the projected annual income may continue to fall below what is expected, or that costs swell due to unforeseen circumstances that place a risk on the national budget.

"With additional income you guarantee that you have the part that you can cover. With a positive development the additional income will help you reduce the national debt," Minister De Meza said. Additional income and reduced costs create a surplus that can be used to reduce the overall deficit faster, "which automatically removes the weight of the interest that you need to pay on loans," De Meza said. The amendment presented by the Green Fraction reduces the employee AZV premium with 1 percent, while simultaneously increasing the Health Tax

(BAZV) by another 1 percent. This change in the budget will guarantee that there is enough income to cover the projected costs, said the Minister. While the AVZ premium only gets paid by taxpaying employees and employers, the Health Tax will be paid by everyone in the community, including visiting tourists. The amendment also guarantees that the employees' net salary remains the same, according to the Minister.

When the tax based is enlarged, as is the case with the Health Tax, it is more beneficial, the Minister said, because the healthcare of employees is taken care of, while their premiums are reduced and at the same time, the income of public health insurer AZV is guaranteed by enlarging its income base, the leader said. "This is also in line with international trends, and in doing so improve the climate of investment and promote new activities," Minister De Meza informed. The simultaneous reduction in the AZV premium of employees is meant to give an economic impulse to counteract the effects of the BAZV increase.

Parliament Member Xiomara Maduro says

The **ABUSE** of this Government must be **exposed, investigated and condemned**

DURING the public debate of the 2015 Budget, opposition party MEP questioned the mindset of the Eman Cabinet using two documents. The documents show instances where according to MEP the Government is taking advantage of the people's trust in them and using the public funds for themselves. This practice is heavily condemned by Parliament Member of the MEP Fraction Xiomara Ruiz-Maduro.

Alarm system for Minister's private residence On one of those documents, it appears the entire Cabinet approves and goes along with the purchase and installation of an alarm system for the Minister of Tourism Otmar Oduber's private home.

This, according to Ruiz-Maduro is an abuse, as the law does not permit these types of costs to be covered for the Ministers of the country. Ruiz-Maduro says she isn't taking issue with the amount spent, and neither is her goal that these costs not get paid for the Minister in the end, however, she does take issue with the fact that Minister Oduber, and the other Ministers of the Eman Cabinet have tried to take advantage of the limited public funds of the country.

"You cannot compare this with the care [provided] by Police that a local or international leader can receive when their safety is at risk, since there are funds that are allocated for the Police Corp and also for National Security. But the safety costs of the private residence of a leader are on his own account," Ruiz-Maduro said. "This is why the fact itself that a request has been made to cover these private costs shows the mindset of the abuse of public funds of

this Government."

Rent funds not going to Museum Ruiz-Maduro said that in his budget, Minister of Economic Affairs Mike De Meza is asking for Afl 34.800 for the renting of a museum in San Nicolas. This, while the Minister in charge of museums is Minister Otmar Oduber, and while the Minister who signs for the renting of buildings is Minister Benny Sevinger.

When MEP pointed out the fact that the Government only paid out Afl 1 in rent, while the Minister asked for Afl 34.800, none of the three Ministers could provide an explanation on where the remaining Afl 34799 went to.

"We have found out that in the building for which the Afl 34.800 was requested, a musical band holds its practices, and that outside there is even a carwash. This is certainly an abuse of public funds that none of the Ministers, including Minister [of Finance] Bermudez can justify," Ruiz-Maduro said.

Investigate and condemn

This is only two concrete cases in which an abuse of public funds has been exposed, Ruiz-Maduro informed. However, she says, it typifies the governing mentality of the Eman Cabinet. That's why the Central Bank, the Board of Financial Supervision (CFT), and the International Monetary Fund tell us that less than 1 percent of funds managed by this Government went to investments, Ruiz-Maduro said. To Ruiz-Maduro this Government must be investigated and condemned for these abuses. "Because with this mentality, the people can be assured that there are many more instances of the abuse of public funds," the Parliament Member said.



Mansion Fire: Mysterious Voicemail Latest Clue in DC Blaze



A running man in a hooded sweatshirt has been named a person of interest in the mysterious case of a quadruple homicide and fire in a Washington, D.C. mansion.

But there is another potential clue that has come to light: A voicemail that Savvas Savopoulos, the homeowner who was found dead alongside his wife, their young son and one of their housekeepers, left for one of their other housekeepers.

On Wednesday night, the evening before the fire, Savopoulos left a message saying that the housekeeper should not come in on Thursday as usual because his wife Amy was sick, the housekeeper said.

He also said that another housekeeper had "offered to stay and help her out because we're going through some stuff with Phillip," their 10 year old son.

On Thursday morning, Amy Savopoulos texted another housekeeper confirming that she should not come in that day because she was sick. "I don't understand why. God saved my life," the housekeeper who received the text said.

Three hours after the text was sent, the home was in flames and the four people, including another housekeeper who had stayed overnight, were all dead inside, police said.

D.C. Police Chief Cathy Lanier would not directly comment about the alleged communications between the housekeeper and the couple.

But authorities have released surveillance footage of a person wearing a hooded sweatshirt running near the home, identifying the person as a person of interest in the quadruple homicide. They also included a picture of the 2008 Porsche convertible that had been previously seen at the house before the fire but was found later in Maryland, abandoned and set on fire.

Source: ABC news

Pope Francis extends agenda of change to Vatican diplomacy

ROME (REUTERS) – Pope Francis' hard-hitting criticisms of globalisation and inequality long ago set him out as a leader unafraid of mixing theology and politics. He is now flexing the Vatican's diplomatic muscles as well.

Last year, he helped to broker an historic accord between Cuba and the United States after half a century of hostility.

This past week, his office announced the first formal accord between the Vatican and the State of Palestine — a treaty that gives legal weight to the Holy See's longstanding recognition of de-facto Palestinian statehood despite clear Israeli annoyance.

The pope ruffled even more feathers in Turkey last month by referring to the massacre of up to 1.5 million Armenians in the early 20th century as a "genocide", something Ankara denies.

After the inward-looking pontificate of his scholarly predecessor, Pope Benedict, Francis has in some ways returned to the active Vatican diplomacy practised by the globetrotting Pope John Paul II, widely credited for helping to end the Cold War.

Much of his effort has concentrated on improving relations between different faiths and protecting the embattled Middle East Christians, a clear priority for the Catholic Church.

However in an increasingly fractured geopolitical world, his diplomacy is less obviously aligned to one side in a global standoff between competing blocs than that of John Paul's 27-year-long papacy.

This is reinforced by his status as the world's first pope from Latin America, a region whose turbulent history, widespread poverty and love-hate relationship with the United States has given him an entirely different political grounding from any of his European predecessors.

"Under this pope, the Vatican's foreign policy looks South," said Massimo Franco, a prominent Italian political commentator and author of several books on the Vatican.

He said the pope has been careful to avoid taking sides on issues like Ukraine, where he has never defined Russia as an aggressor, but has always referred to the conflict between the government and Moscow-backed rebels as a civil war.

That approach is intended to ensure he remains more credible with countries like Syria, Russia or Cuba, all nations where Francis feels he can help local Christians best by steering an independent course.

DIPLOMATIC RISKS

Francis already has his hands full overhauling the Vatican's complex internal bureaucracy after a series of financial and sexual scandals involving abuse of children by priests which date back decades.

But clearly deeply interested in how the world outside the walls of the Vatican works, he appears determined to use his position and the huge global audience he commands to challenge entrenched diplomatic positions as well.

The former secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio



Bertone, a veteran insider whose office formerly controlled both relations with foreign powers and many internal Vatican affairs, has been replaced. His office has been downgraded to resemble a more classical diplomatic service while Francis has set a bolder, more personal stamp on Vatican foreign policy.

"He's someone who's capable of praying in the Blue Mosque in Istanbul and then talking about the Armenian genocide. He's not someone who's bound by political correctness," said former Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini.

"It's the diplomacy of a real leader."

Whether it is to the taste of all the world's 1.2 billion Catholics, world politicians with priorities of their own or even the many layers of the Church's own administration is another matter.

With many conservative Catholics unhappy about the pope's focus on issues like economic justice and his relatively tolerant tone on sensitive social topics like homosexuality and the status of divorced people, pronounced views on delicate diplomatic issues could cause further division in the Church.

It is a point where he will be particularly tested in September on his upcoming visit to the United States, where some conservative U.S. Catholics are openly hostile.

After helping to foster last year's agreement reviving diplomatic relations between Havana and Washington, Francis reaped criticism from many U.S. conservatives, including Marco Rubio, a candidate for the Republican nomination for president.

Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants and a practising Catholic, avoided directly admonishing the pope, but said he should "take up the cause of freedom and democracy" in Cuba.

That kind of veiled criticism from a politician who would normally be considered a staunch Church ally reflects the wider unease some Catholics feel at the change Francis has ushered in at one of the world's most conservative institutions.

"Bishops complain that he becomes popular by attacking the Church," said Franco.

"He speaks directly to the people and doesn't respect the usual command structures. He decides on his own or with people who are not those who previously had a central role."

Mass arrests, revenge fears after deadly Texas biker gang shootout

WACO, TEXAS (REUTERS)

– Police braced for retaliation attacks after 170 people were charged on Monday in connection with the shootout among motorcycle gangs a day earlier that left nine dead and 18 wounded at a Waco, Texas, restaurant turned into a blood-soaked crime scene.

Bikers from five rival gangs attacked each other with guns, knives, brass knuckles, clubs and motorcycle chains at a Twin Peaks Sports Bar and Grill in the central Texas city. No bystanders or police were injured, police said.



When the bikers began shooting, officers stationed outside moved in, some of them also firing their weapons. When the shooting ended, bodies were scattered in the restaurant and across two parking lots.

"Yesterday's events was bad guys on bad guys. When our officers arrived, those bad guys turned their guns on our officers," Waco Police Sergeant Patrick Swanton told a news briefing.

Bikers were reported to be travelling to the city following the shooting and police have been threatened, he said.

"There was a green light put out on law enforcement, is our understanding from last night. We are aware of that threat," Swanton said.

About 100 weapons were recovered from the crime scene, which was strewn with shell casings, police said. "We are not in a rush. This is obviously a very large investigation involving numerous agencies and organizations and we are going to get it right," he said. The arrested group was first taken to a local convention centre and then moved to a county jail. Police took positions on overpasses and building tops to provide security.

"We have layers of protection," Swanton said.

Those taken into custody were charged with engaging in organised crime for capital murder and likely will face other charges related to the bloodshed after an investigation of the sprawling crime scene.

BANDIDOS BIKERS, BEERS AND BLOODSHED

Among the gangs involved in the shooting were the Bandidos Motorcycle Club, which the U.S. Justice Department says has between 2,000 to 2,500 members in the United States and 13 other countries. It is the one of the biggest motorcycle gangs and a rival to the better-known Hells Angels.

"The Bandidos are involved in transporting and distributing cocaine and marijuana and are involved in the production, transportation and distribution of methamphetamine," according to a Justice Department fact sheet.

The gangs try to keep under the radar as much as possible to avoid attention for their criminal activities, law enforcement officials said. But the tension between the Bandidos and rival groups in Texas, including the Cossacks, came to a head at the gang meeting in Waco, where about 200 people were present.

The dispute appeared to be over territory and membership, Swanton said, adding that there was no indication it was caused by a fight over drug trafficking.

The fight likely started with a shove or two in a restroom that moved into the restaurant and then spilled out into parking lots, where police had positioned themselves in anticipation of trouble. A few of the injured staggered out of the restaurant and died on the parking lot.

"(It) quickly escalated into a fist fight, which turned into a knife fight, which immediately turned into a gun fight," Swanton said.

Twin Peaks is a chain restaurant known for scantily clad waitresses serving bar food and large mugs of beer.

The Waco restaurant had been used as a meeting place for motorcycle gangs for the past few months, police said. They had asked the restaurant's managers to put a halt to the meetings but said they did not heed the requests.

Twin Peaks on Monday revoked the franchise rights from the Dallas-based company that ran the Waco restaurant for not doing enough to ensure security.

"Unfortunately the management team of the franchised restaurant in Waco chose to ignore the warnings and advice from both the police and our company, and did not uphold the high security standards we have in place to ensure everyone is safe at our restaurants," the company said in a statement.



Waco shootings: for Texas restaur



TWIN Peaks has revoked the franchise rights for Waco, Texas, that was the scene of a shootout involving motorcycle gangs that left nine bikers dead and 18 injured. Company spokesman Rick Van Warner confirmed that the Waco venue's franchise agreement will be terminated. The restaurant only opened last August and Waco has since been the scene of several biker gang gatherings. Restaurant managers did not cooperate when authorities expressed concern about those gatherings. Van Warner said in a statement that the management ignored warnings and advice from the company, and the "high security standards" that the company required. About 170 gang members were arrested in the aftermath of the shooting.

About 170 motorcycle gang members charged with organized crime are each being held on a \$1 million bond. Charges are expected.

McLennan County Justice of the Peace W.H. Peterson Monday for each suspect and described the amount given the level of violence that occurred a day earlier at the restaurant in Waco.

Peterson also performed inquests on the nine dead bikers to identify them pending notification of family. Peterson were from Texas.

Waco police Sgt. W. Patrick Swanton says while charges are likely, it's too early to determine how many gang members will face the charge.



Franchise rights revoked restaurant where melee began

at a restaurant in
involving rival motor-
cyclists.
On Monday that the
melee ended.

Police say it has
been years. Police say
authorities expressed
concern. A team chose to
investigate but did not establish
causes.
The aftermath of Sunday's

an engaging in or-
ganized crime in the wake
of a capital murder
case.
The person set the bond
as "appropriate"
for a Twin Peaks

bikers but declined
comment, saying all nine

capital murder
many motorcycle

The head of the Texas Department of Public Safety says the violence that unfolded in Waco when rival motorcycle gangs opened fire on each other in a restaurant parking lot is unprecedented.

DPS Director Steve McCraw, a former FBI agent, said Monday that the shootout Sunday was the first time "we've seen this type of violence in broad daylight."

McCraw's agency sent Texas Rangers to process the crime scene and special agents who target motorcycle gangs.

He wouldn't reveal details about what prompted the melee that killed nine bikers. Waco police say a dispute that began in a Twin Peaks restaurant bathroom spilled into the parking lot.

McCraw says DPS is constantly monitoring biker gangs and that motorcycle gang violence dates back to at least the 1970s.

About 170 people have been arrested and a restaurant has been closed after a shootout among rival motorcycle gangs left nine bikers dead. Waco police on Monday announced the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission closed Twin Peaks for a week amid safety concerns.

Police say the deadly gunfire broke out Sunday following a dispute in a bathroom that moved into the parking lot. Police say 18 bikers were wounded.

Police initially said 192 people were being booked on charges of engaging in organized crime, but revised that number downward Monday. Sgt. W. Patrick Swanton says law enforcement will continue to guard the town after receiving threats overnight from various biker groups. The Texas commission, responsible for alcohol regulations and compliance, then closed Twin Peaks for seven days.

Source: StarTribune

Belgium convicts seven women for supporting Islamic State

BRUSSELS (REUTERS) – A Belgian court on Monday handed out prison sentences to seven women for supporting Islamic State and radicalising young women to go to Syria to join its ranks and marry fighters of the militant organisation.

Four of the seven women – five Belgians, one Dutch and one Moroccan – were not in court to hear their convictions and were believed to be in Syria with female battalions of Islamic State, the Antwerp-based court said. In their absence, they were given five-year prison sentences for their activities with those battalions, including patrolling and guarding entrances to towns and cities in Syria.

The women present in court were guilty of facilitating the departure of Islamic State recruits and collecting money for organisations aiming to radicalise young girls. They received prison sentences of between 20 and 30 months. In February, 45 men belonging to radical Islamist group Sharia4Belgium stood trial, accused of being part of a terrorist organisation. The head of the group received a 12-year prison sentence.

Israel holds Jordanian-Canadian national for alleged Hamas links

JERUSALEM (REUTERS) – Israel has detained a Palestinian with dual Canadian and Jordanian citizenship suspected of links with the Islamist group Hamas, an Israeli security official told Reuters on Monday. The official, who could not be named, said Ibrahim Siam was detained on May 5 at the Allenby Bridge as he tried to cross into Jordan from the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Khalil Rezaq, chairman of the Ramallah Chamber of Commerce told Reuters that Siam, an auto parts dealer, had attended a business conference in Ramallah and accused Israel of "putting obstacles in the way of businessmen wanting to visit Palestine."

Jordanian and Canadian diplomats based in Israel confirmed to Reuters that Siam was being held. The Canadian said Siam was receiving consular assistance. Both declined to elaborate.

"Siam is being investigated by the Shin Bet (internal undercover security agency) and his remand was extended by a military court. A petition to the Supreme Court to allow him to see his lawyer was rejected," the Israeli official told Reuters.

Israel and most Western countries consider Islamist Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, to be a terrorist organisation.

AT LEAST 48 DEAD, DOZENS INJURED IN COLOMBIA LANDSLIDE



A landslide sent mud and water crashing onto homes in a town in Colombia's northwest mountains on Monday, killing at least 48 people and injuring dozens, officials said.

"The earth slid into the course of the La Liboriana ravine, then the dammed water caused an avalanche which destroyed everything in its path" in Salgar in Antioquia department, regional police commander Jose Angel Mendoza said in an interview.

"We have 48 bodies in the morgue; 27 injured people have been attended to and the search for various missing people continues," Carlos Ivan Marquez, the director of the national disaster unit, told journalists.

Rescue teams, including search dogs, were being mobilized in the area, he added.

Photographs released by the country's air force and television news footage showed homes and streets covered in mud and debris in the town in a mountainous area close to the Colombian Andes. Residents were shown digging through rubble with sticks and their



hands, looking for survivors.

"People that you knew, children, young people, whole families lost their homes. We're on alert because there are fears there could be another landslide," resident Maria Gutierrez told local media.

"It almost gave me a heartache. We saw

big waves and people and pigs going down in the water."

President Juan Manuel Santos, who is enroute to visit the town, said via Twitter that Colombia's government will provide aid to the victims.

"We are attending to the emergency in

Salgar. Those affected will receive all our support."

Additional but less intense rain is expected over the next two to three days, meteorology officials said.

Source: Reuters

Police clash with Palestinians as Israelis march for 'Jerusalem Day'

JERUSALEM (REUTERS)

– Mounted Israeli police clashed with dozens of rock-throwing Palestinians protesting on Sunday as Jewish nationalists commemorated Israel's 1967 capture of East Jerusalem with a march through the old walled city.

Police said two officers protecting the thousands of Jewish marchers were injured by rocks and six Palestinians were arrested.

Reuters Television filmed police, some wielding batons, dragging several Palestinian men from the scene by their arms and legs during the clashes just outside the Damascus Gate leading into the crowded old city.

Police estimated more than 30,000 Israelis marched through old Jerusalem's mostly Muslim quarter to the Western Wall, the last remnant of the Temple destroyed by the ancient Romans.

Police advised Muslim merchants to shutter their shops during the annual march on



what Israel calls Jerusalem Day, the anniversary of its capture of East Jerusalem from Jordan. Israel later annexed the area, making it a part of its capital in a move never recognised internationally. The war was in June, but Israel marks its anniversary according to the Jewish lunar

calendar.

Next to the Western Wall, the march's destination, stands the contested site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif, which contains al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, and the Dome of the Rock shrine.



Mairav Zonszein
@MairavZ

Seguir

Palestinians attacked, then arrested, during #JerusalemDay march - @activestills

10:26 AM - 17 Mayo 2015

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Israeli ultranationalists have been pressing for prayer rights there, which has heightened tensions with Palestinians.

The old city is also home to Christian holy sites such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on the site where Christian tradition says Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected.

Palestinians, who account for more than 30 percent of the city's overall population, want East Jerusalem to be capital of

the state they seek to establish in the West Bank and Gaza, also land that Israel captured in the 1967 war.

The Jerusalem march went ahead after the Israeli Supreme Court rejected a civil rights group's petition to ban the march through mostly Palestinian areas of the old city to avoid violence.

Justices said they found police had taken measures to enforce the law at the site.

Singapore calls on Iran to investigate tanker incident

SINGAPORE (REUTERS) – The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said on Monday that it has requested the Iranian maritime authorities to investigate an incident last week when Iranian vessels fired shots at a Singapore-flagged tanker in the Gulf. Alpine Eternity, the vessel that came under fire, had collided with an Iranian oil drilling platform in March, which triggered a call from Iran to its neighbours to seize the ship and hand it over to Iran. Singapore's MPA said that it requested its Iranian counterpart prevent future recurrences, as the freedom of navigation and free flow of commerce are of critical importance to Singapore and other countries. "Such interference with navigational rights is a serious violation of international law," it said in a statement, adding that Singapore was deeply concerned by such actions.



Photo: Joel Kifer, MarineTraffic

All wards open at Raigmore after latest norovirus outbreak



SCOTLAND - All wards at Inverness's Raigmore Hospital are now open following the latest norovirus outbreak. Ward 5C reopened at the weekend after a period of deep cleaning. But, with the bug still rife in the community, patients are being asked not to visit the hospital until absolutely necessary. The plea follows a strained few weeks for NHS Highland's flagship hospital, which has had to close several wards because of norovirus. Dr Adam Brown, consultant microbiologist for NHS Highland, said: "I'm pleased that we've been able to reopen Ward 5c and would like to thank members of the public for their cooperation and understanding during this period of closure. "I would however, like to remind people that norovirus is still very active in the community, so we would ask that everyone remain vigilant. "If you, or anyone you live with, has had any vomiting or diarrhoea within the previous 72-hours, please do not come into the hospital. By doing this, we will be able to reduce, as much as we can, the chance of Norovirus coming back into the hospital. "We would like to appeal to members of the public to only visit their friends and relatives at Raigmore if it is absolutely necessary." Iona McGauran, interim lead nurse for Raigmore Hospital, praised all the staff for their hard work during the outbreak. She said: "The ward staff and our infection prevention and control team have done an excellent job in keeping this outbreak as contained as much as possible, while also ensuring that patients were getting the best possible care. "Our domestic staff have again played a huge part and have done a sterling job in cleaning, which has allowed us to reopen the ward. "I would like to reiterate that we ask people only to visit the hospital if it is absolutely necessary. "Hospital staff will of course be happy to talk to visitors over the phone so they can get updates on how their relatives are."

Source: Press and Journal

Dean Potter dies in BASE jumping tragedy



DEAN Potter, 43, and Graham Hunt 29, were killed in a wingsuit jumping accident over the weekend. The pair had jumped from the 7,500-foot Taft Point in Yosemite National Park on Saturday evening, according to the Associated Press.

They were reported missing that night after losing contact with their spotter. Yosemite chief of staff Mike Gauthier told Outside Magazine that the spotter heard two sounds. It could have been impact, or it could have been their safety parachutes deploying. When they didn't arrive at the designated meeting point, the spotter and others were hopeful that the men had been arrested for attempting the illegal jumps.

Park officials immediately started a search-and-rescue, to no avail. Their bodies were discovered Sunday morning in Yosemite Valley.

Potter and Hunt wore wingsuits for the jump, skintight suits that allow a paragliding-like experience. Detailed in a 2012 60 Minutes piece, it's as close to flying as humans can get. The suits include a parachute that should deploy as jumpers near the ground. Potter and Hunt's parachutes did not deploy, according to park ranger Scott Gediman. The jumps they were attempting are illegal in all national parks. Boundaries never held Potter back, though. Once sponsored by Patagonia and Clif Bar, he had lost his sponsorships in recent years because the companies decided he was taking unnecessary risks that, according to Patagonia, "compromised access to wild places." In 2009, National Geographic named Potter the "Adventurer of the Year" after he completed a record-length BASE jump in Switzerland. No matter how much he enjoyed it, he understood the risks inherent in his sport of choice.

"Though sometimes I have felt like I'm above it all and away from any harm, I want people to realize how powerful climbing, extreme sports or any other death-consequence pursuits are," he wrote on his blog in October 2014. "There is nothing fake about it whether you see it in real life, on YouTube or in a glamorous commercial."

Source: Yahoo

Rockets back in conference finals first 1st time since '97

HOUSTON (AP) -- The Houston Rockets are heading to the Western Conference finals for the first time in 18 years after overcoming a 3-1 series deficit to eliminate the "It's the ultimate confidence-booster," James Harden said. "There's only a handful of teams that's done that. We fought back. We fought three really hard games and came away with it."

Harden scored 31 points, Dwight Howard had 16 points and 15 rebounds and the Rockets never trailed in a 113-100 victory over the Clippers Sunday, sending them to the conference finals for the first time since 1997.

It's the ninth time in NBA history that a team has overcome a 3-1 series deficit to win a playoff series. The Rockets overcame a 19-point third-quarter deficit in Game 6 on Thursday night to stay alive. No such heroics were needed Sunday when they were up by 17 after three and Howard opened the fourth quarter with a 3-point play to push it to 88-68.

"When you're down 19 on the road, it's easy to give in and just say, 'Maybe next year,'" Harden said. "But I think the injuries throughout the entire year kind of made us fight through adversity no matter what. We always find a way to fight, and another case was being down 3-1."

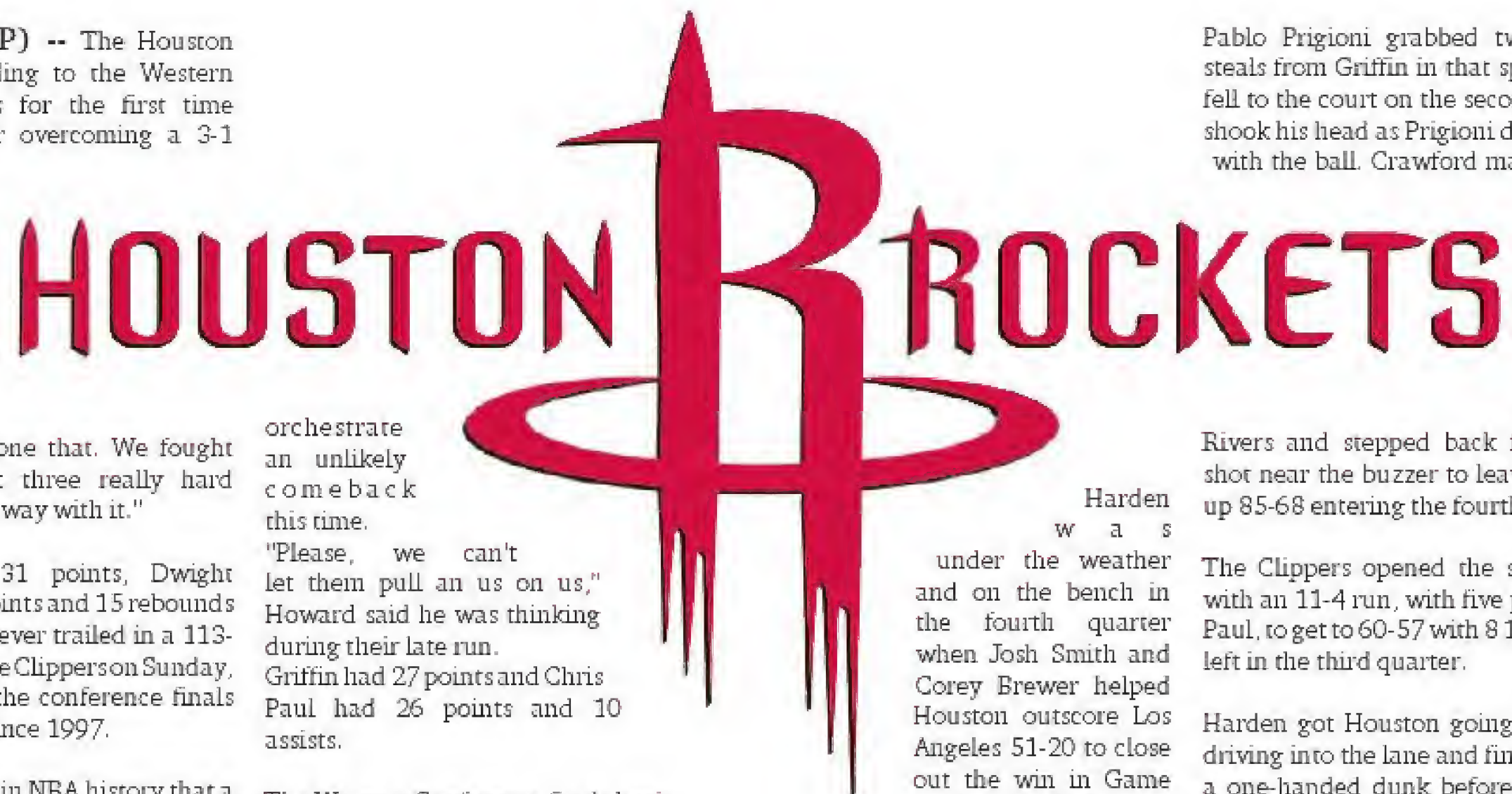
Blake Griffin scored five points in a 9-0 run to cut the lead to eight points with less than 2 1/2 minutes remaining. Harden made a pair of free throws after that, but a dunk by DeAndre Jordan got the Clippers within eight again. This time, Trevor Ariza hit a 3 from the corner to secure the victory.

Howard was nervous until Ariza hit the final 3 and worried the Clippers might be the ones to

orchestrate an unlikely comeback this time.

"Please, we can't let them pull an us on us," Howard said he was thinking during their late run. Griffin had 27 points and Chris Paul had 26 points and 10 assists.

The Western Conference finals begin Tuesday night at Golden State. Ariza finished with 22 points and made six 3-pointers. After taking a two-game lead after four games the Clippers looked destined to be heading to the conference finals for the first time in franchise history. But they failed in all three chances to put Houston away and are now left to ponder their collapse as they head home early yet again.



Pablo Prigioni grabbed two straight steals from Griffin in that span. Griffin fell to the court on the second one and shook his head as Prigioni darted away with the ball. Crawford made a layup for L.A. but Harden shook

off Austin Rivers and stepped back for a jump shot near the buzzer to leave Houston up 85-68 entering the fourth.

The Clippers opened the second half with an 11-4 run, with five points from Paul, to get to 60-57 with 8 1/2 minutes left in the third quarter.

Harden got Houston going after that, driving into the lane and finishing with a one-handed dunk before dishing to Smith on the next possession and he swished a 3-pointer to make it 65-57. The Rockets remained up by 8 midway through the quarter when Howard was called for a three second violation. But Griffin launched a bad pass that Prigioni snatched up and converted on the mistake with a 3-pointer to make it 70-59.

Source: Yahoo Sports

Harden was under the weather and on the bench in the fourth quarter when Josh Smith and Corey Brewer helped Houston outscore Los Angeles 51-20 to close out the win in Game 6. The MVP runner-up looked back to full strength on Sunday, scoring 12 points in the first quarter and finishing with eight assists and seven rebounds.

A 3-pointer by Jamal Crawford with about 2 1/2 minutes left in the third quarter cut the lead to eight points. Houston scored the next nine points, with five from Ariza, to push it to 83-66.

